

## Message Text

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53

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

NEA-10 GAC-01 MBFR-03 SAJ-01 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01

SAL-01 OMB-01 IO-12 RSR-01 /181 W  
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R 171240 Z MAR 73

FM USMISSION BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1539

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ETRD, GE, SU

SUBJ: GDR TRADE DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A. BERLIN 410, B. BERLIN A-60

1. AT INTERNATIONAL PRESS CONFERENCE DURING LEIPZIG FAIR, HORST SOELLE, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE, STATED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT GDR' S 1972 FOREIGN TRADE VOLUME REACHED 46.8 BILLION MARKS, WHICH REPRESENTS A 10.8 PERCENT INCREASE OVER PRECEDING YEAR. IT IS OF INTEREST, HOWEVER, THAT THIS GROWTH WAS BELOW FIGURE EN-VISAGED BY 1972 PLAN (12.5 PERCENT). IT ALSO WAS LOWER THAN GROWTH RATE ACHIEVED IN FIRST HALF OF 1972 (13.7 PERCENT). IN ADDI-TION, SOELLE PROVIDED FIGURES FROM WHICH WE HAVE CALCULATED AN IMPORT GROWTH RATE OF 8.8 PERCENT, WHICH IS CONSIDERABLY UNDER PLAN OBJECTIVE OF 13.5 PERCENT.

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2. WHILE SOELLE SAID THAT GDR/ USSR TRADE VOLUME HAD EXPANDED, AVAILABLE FIGURES SHOW THAT RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF USSR AS A PARTNER HAS DECREASED. FOR EXAMPLE, SOVIET UNION'S SHARE OF GDR FOREIGN TRADE VOLUME IN 1962 WAS 48.8 PERCENT. BY 1971 IT HAD DROPPED TO 38.2 PERCENT AND, ACCORDING TO SOELLE, FIGURE FOR 1972 WAS 37.6 PERCENT. IN COMPARISON TO THIS, GDR TRADE WITH WEST GREW FROM 19 PERCENT IN 1962 TO 24.2 PERCENT IN 1971 AND 25.5 PERCENT IN 1972. PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY GROWTH RATES IN 1972 WERE REPORTED FOR GDR TRADE WITH ITALY (32 PERCENT), FRANCE (21 PERCENT), AND AUSTRIA (28 PERCENT).

3. SOELLE CHOSE NOT TO SPEAK ABOUT GDR TRADE OR PAYMENTS BALANCES. HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO WEST BERLIN JOURNALISTS' S QUERY REGARDING GDR TRADE BALANCE IN 1972, SOELLE SAID GDR HAD RECORDED A SURPLUS IN BILLIONS WITH COMECON COUNTRIES. WHEN PRESSED, SOELLE STATED HE COULD NOT YET PROVIDE FIGURE ON GDR TRADE BALANCE WITH WEST INASMUCH AS CONSTANTLY FLUCTUATING CURRENCY VALUES MADE A CALCULATION EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. KLEIN

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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